

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-26-AD; Amendment 39-12942; AD 2002-22-15]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model EC 155B Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) for the specified Eurocopter France (ECF) model helicopters that requires inspecting and adjusting, if necessary, the position of the locking pins on each pilot, co-pilot, and passenger-hinged and sliding door (door) initially and each time a door is replaced. This amendment is prompted by two reports of inadvertent opening of the passenger-hinged doors in flight due to improper adjustment of the door-locking mechanism. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent loss of a door in flight, contact with the main rotor or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of helicopter control.

DATES: Effective December 17, 2002.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of December 17, 2002.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005, telephone (972) 641-3460, fax (972) 641-3527. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Monschke, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0110, telephone (817) 222-5116, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend 14 CFR part 39 to include an AD for ECF Model EC 155B helicopters was published in the Federal Register on August 14, 2002 (67 FR 52898). That action proposed to require inspecting and adjusting, if necessary, the position of the locking pins on each pilot, co-pilot, and passenger-hinged and sliding door (door) initially and each time a door is replaced.

The Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (DGAC), the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on ECF Model EC 155B helicopters. The DGAC advises of two reports of the passenger-hinged doors opening in flight. The investigation revealed noncompliant installation and adjustment of the door-locking mechanism, which can result in the door unlocking and a risk of losing the door in flight.

ECF has issued Alert Telex 52-A008, dated March 11, 2002, which specifies checking and adjusting the position of each door's locking pins to prevent the door opening in flight. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD No. 2002-186-005(A), dated April 3, 2002, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in France.

This helicopter model is manufactured in France and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of 14 CFR 21.29 and the applicable bilateral agreement. Pursuant to the applicable bilateral agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. No comments were received on the proposal or the FAA's determination of the cost to the public. The FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed.

The FAA estimates that 2 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 4 work hours per helicopter to accomplish the required actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$480.

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39–AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive to read as follows:

AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE

Aircraft Certification Service
Washington, DC



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

We post ADs on the internet at "www.airweb.faa.gov/rgl"

The following Airworthiness Directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with the provisions of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39, applies to an aircraft model of which our records indicate you may be the registered owner. Airworthiness Directives affect aviation safety and are regulations which require immediate attention. You are cautioned that no person may operate an aircraft to which an Airworthiness Directive applies, except in accordance with the requirements of the Airworthiness Directive (reference 14 CFR part 39, subpart 39.3).

2002-22-15 Eurocopter France: Amendment 39-12942. Docket No. 2002-SW-26-AD.

Applicability: Model EC 155B helicopters, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For helicopters that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required within 25 hours time-in-service, unless accomplished previously, and each time a pilot, co-pilot, or passenger-hinged or sliding (door) is replaced.

To prevent loss of a door in flight, contact with the main rotor or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of helicopter control, accomplish the following:

(a) Inspect and adjust, if necessary, the position of each door's locking pins in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 2, of Eurocopter France Alert Telex No. 52-A008, dated March 11, 2002 (Telex), except you are not required to comply with the caution and with the reporting requirements of the Telex, and you may consider shimming by washers a permanent repair.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Regulations Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Regulations Group.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Regulations Group.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199 to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(d) Inspecting and adjusting the position of the door's locking mechanism shall be done in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Eurocopter France Alert Telex No. 52-A008, dated March 11, 2002. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from

American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005, telephone (972) 641-3460, fax (972) 641-3527. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on December 17, 2002.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 2002-186-005(A), dated April 3, 2002.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on October 28, 2002.

David A. Downey,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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